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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION (UNAVEM II)

Addendum

I. THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN ANGOLA

1. In view of the continuing decerioration of the humanitarian situation in Angola since the issuance of my report dated 20 June 1994 (S/1994/740), I wish to provide the Security Council with a more comprehensive account of recent developments and their consequences for the civilian population of the country.

2. The intensification of the war throughout Angola since the end of May 1994 has led to a series of incidents that have gravely affected the safety of relief workers, brought the delivery of relief supplies by air to a complete standstill and by road to a much-reduced level and jeopardized the progress made over the last nine months in stabilizing the condition of the vulnerable population. The number of serious violations of humanitarian law in Angola has escalated dramatically, and there are now clear signs of rapid deterioration in the humanitarian situation in places where access is being denied.

3. The incidents leading up to the current situation can be summarized as follows:

(a) The first signs of serious deterioration came in the week of 16 May, when four consecutive security incidents (shelling and shooting) affecting the safe landing of World Food Programme (WFP) relief planes at Malange caused the United Nations to suspend flights temporarily to that provincial capital. In response to the shelling in Malange, the Government of Angola suspended all cargo flights to Huambo and Uíge Provinces;

(b) Despite special high-level discussions between the United Nations and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to resume flights to all areas, and assurances from both sides that cargo flights could resume to Malange, shelling started just as a WFP cargo flight was about to land on 27 May, forcing it to abort landing and return to Luanda. On 31 May, the lives of humanitarian workers were put at great risk when the airport at Malange was shelled immediately after a United Nations light aircraft, authorized by both sides, had landed to collect relief workers.

(c) The start of heavy shelling and fighting in Kuito on 26 May and sporadic serial bombardment of Huambo and its surroundings from 29 May caused further serious difficulties. On 31 May, the Huambo airport was bombed as relief workers were waiting to depart for Luanda. In Kuito, relief workers were trapped in bunkers for eight days before being evacuated by a specially negotiated WFP flight on 4 June;

(d) With the exception of Malange, Kuito, Huambo and Uíge, United Nations relief flights continued according to the normal weekly plan through the beginning of June;

(e) On 10 June, a clearly marked WFP cargo plane with security clearance from both sides was shelled as it was unloading relief items at Balombo, Benguela Province, causing the suspension of further flights to Balombo that day;

(f) On 11 June, UNITA began to place strict limitations on the movement of humanitarian staff based at Huambo to areas outside the city. On 12 June, UNITA refused clearance of the United Nations flight plan for the period from 13 to 19 June, effectively putting a halt to the delivery of food aid and other essential relief items;

(g) On 15 June, when a staff member from a non-governmental organization was evacuated from Huambo for medical reasons, UNITA prevented other United Nations and non-governmental organization staff members from boarding the plane. This restriction was a clear breach of humanitarian law and of an agreement signed between the United Nations and UNITA in December 1993 which states that relief organizations working in UNITA-held territories can have unrestricted movement to carry out their humanitarian programmes. However, on 17 June, as a result of the interventions undertaken by my Special Representative and the representatives of the three observer States (Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States of America), 23 United Nations and non-governmental organization staff members were flown out of Huambo on a special flight organized by UNAVEM II and the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit;

(h) Despite efforts by my Special Representative to obtain clearance from UNITA to send a special flight to Malange to evacuate humanitarian workers, UNITA did not give an early reply and, once again, refused to clear the United Nations flight plan for the period from 20 to 26 June;

(i) On 21 June, despite clearances from UNAVEM II and the Angolan Armed Forces, a 20-truck WFP relief convoy heading towards Bocoio in Benguela Province was attacked by mortar and small arms fire, resulting in the destruction of 15 trucks and their cargo. This incident underlines yet again the prevailing instability throughout most of the country and the difficulty of overland access;

(j) As a result of a United Nations initiative and international pressure on UNITA, on 23 June, an International Committee of the Red Cross plane was cleared to carry out a medical evacuation from Malange of five sick relief workers. However, another 20 relief workers are still there and wish to leave.

Owing to the lack of supplies, they are unable to continue providing assistance for 240,000 beneficiaries in the besieged city.

4. In practice, only a very small part of Angola is currently accessible by air or road for humanitarian work. The humanitarian situation is deteriorating rapidly throughout the country. The effects of the suspension of flights and the increased insecurity will soon be catastrophic. In Kuito, for example, the fighting continues, leading to the deaths of hundreds of civilians and placing hundreds more at immediate risk unless medical supplies can be brought in for treatment. Relief agencies are currently unable to deliver any food supplies to needy beneficiaries in the interior, which is especially critical for the residents and displaced persons trapped in the besieged provincial capitals of Malange, Luena and Menongue. These people will once again face starvation unless relief flights resume before the end of June.

5. Although relief agencies in some locations are able to continue emergency programmes on a limited scale through the use of buffer stocks, a deterioration of the humanitarian situation for the general population, and especially for the vulnerable groups, is already apparent in Malange, Cubal and Kuito. Food stocks are completely exhausted in these locations, and no alternative sources of food are available. It is essential that flights resume to these towns at the earliest opportunity. Other cities, such as Luena, Menongue, Saurimo and Huambo, are also at risk of a rapid deterioration should the suspension of relief flights continue.

6. Furthermore, many other areas affected by the ongoing conflict, such as around the provincial capital of N'Dalatando, have not yet been accessed by humanitarian workers, and countless Angolans, in addition to those already identified as target beneficiaries, are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.

II. OBSERVATIONS

7. As described above, the humanitarian situation in Angola is undergoing a dramatic decline and many thousands of lives are imperilled. Among the main factors contributing to this deterioration is the suspension of relief flights, for which UNITA continues to withhold authorization. I would therefore recommend that the Security Council urge the parties to the conflict, in particular UNITA, to take the necessary action to permit the resumption of humanitarian assistance in all parts of the country.